



■ One of the sites in the county where gypsies live, with, inset, Cllr Richard Stay

A dozen gypsies gatecrash county council's meeting

GYPSIES invaded a meeting at the county council last week and managed to air their views for more than an hour.

The meeting was intended to be between district and county councillors and representatives from the county's traveller sites to discuss the possibility of establishing a transit site, a point where travellers would be able to drop in and stay briefly, and also to look at long term strategies for the provision of traveller sites.

However a group of about 12 gypsies waiting outside made their

way past reception claiming they were entitled to attend the meeting.

Once inside the councillors decided it would be more beneficial to let them stay rather than forcing them to leave and they sat alongside county council leader Philip Hendry.

Problem

The meeting was designed to discuss the increasing problem of gypsies moving around the county and leaving massive clean-up bills in their wake.

County councillor Richard Stay, executive member for information and systems, said: "In the context of

a private meeting we were extremely deprived and concerned that a group of travellers, including children, barged into the meeting.

"It was not exactly conducive to our discussions."

A Bedfordshire County Council spokesman said: "It is not the first time that this group has met and it meets on a quarterly basis.

"One of the jobs of the group is to confirm temporary and permanent travellers sites in the county.

"The representatives of the various traveller groups helped councillors to do this."